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# THE BERLIN CRISIS OF 1958/59: A CASE OF PRAGMATIC RESTRAINT

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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In  
History

by  
Richard D. Williamson  
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## Abstract

This paper examines the 1958-1959 Berlin crisis as a diplomatic experience, conducted mainly by the U.S. and U.S.S.R as an alternative to war. Both nations had nuclear weapons capabilities that could rapidly transform a basically local conflict into total war. The potential for disaster, plus other limiting factors, made a series of diplomatic encounters the only productive option. The diplomatic course also shielded American and Russian interests not directly related to the conflict. Each nation and its leader had pragmatic reasons for practicing restraint. These included conservation of assets, political stability, and most importantly, the dubious chances for sustainable gains. Limited war doctrine was influential in establishing these policies.

## **Introduction**

Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's 1958-59 proposals to deny Western access to Berlin and revise the existing German settlement challenged the balance of power in Europe and Western allied unity. The United States could not allow Khrushchev to unilaterally abrogate the Potsdam occupation agreements without a serious erosion of American influence in Europe.<sup>1</sup> President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had to reconcile longstanding policy goals, including the reunification of Germany, with the difficulties of effectively using military force to assert Allied treaty rights in Berlin.

The Americans pragmatically pursued a diplomatic solution that consistently resisted pressure from Allied and U.S. military leaders to exercise force. In the early stages of the conflict, Dulles' personal command of the situation neutralized military assertiveness. When Dulles was replaced due to illness by Christian Herter, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) made a more determined effort to extend their influence at a meeting in mid-March 1959. But Eisenhower was not going to change course at a point when negotiations indicated a near-term resolution to the crisis. At the same time, the President made it clear to the Soviets that the United States would risk war if necessary. This restrained but tough course maintained the viability of the status quo in Germany without destroying chances for an improved settlement. It even provided some cautious hope for progress through renewed ministerial negotiations. The United States was able to neutralize the Soviet threat without unacceptable retreat or actual conflict.

This episode did not produce any major change in the status of Berlin or the two Germanys. As such, it is often considered as just a prelude to the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961

without the drama of the latter event. However, a tense diplomatic crisis with very real dangers of nuclear combat in the wings did exist from November 1958 until to the Foreign Minister's Conference in May 1959. It started and ended over diplomatic tables, but there was a background of military alert and public apprehension on both the American and Soviet sides.<sup>2</sup> That readiness reflected Khrushchev's six month deadline before the USSR would take unilateral political action unacceptable to the West. Fortunately, actual military confrontations were few and brief. The fact that military capabilities were not used did not lessen the danger that the conflict might have escalated into general war.

This crisis, referred to here as "Berlin II", is most often considered as a conflict arising from the unresolved status of Germany, NATO disunity, nuclear tensions and superpower hegemony in Europe. It was also a deliberate Soviet provocation of the U.S. beyond just the European context. The United States had to deal with the Soviets in other regions of the world and faced possible horizontal escalation in Asia and the Middle East, where the other Western powers had little remaining interest.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, most of the US and Soviet activities in Berlin II were conducted at the diplomatic level. Khrushchev's November 28 proposal for a Western withdrawal from Berlin and a new German settlement was a diplomatic challenge, not a military confrontation.<sup>4</sup> Secretary of State John Foster Dulles went to Europe in December for consultations with America's European allies. From these meetings, the US, France, Britain and West Germany drafted communiqués and delivered them to the Soviets at year's end.<sup>5</sup> Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan visited Washington in January to present a more belligerent and impatient reply, including a draft German peace treaty.<sup>6</sup> In response, the ailing Dulles made a final trip to Europe in February to restore some Allied coherence.<sup>7</sup> However, Prime Minister Sir Harold Macmillan's subsequent



solo venture to Moscow<sup>8</sup> and other differences during March<sup>9</sup> skewed these gains to some degree.

Dulles's cautions to French President Charles DeGaulle and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer for coolness and flexibility strained Allied relations. But his patience also established a framework for his replacement, Acting Secretary Christian Herter, to build upon. Direct diplomatic contact continued between the US and USSR throughout the spring of 1959, including further tough hints from the Soviets about their own nuclear resolve.<sup>10</sup> The worst was over by then. By late April, tensions with the East and among the allies dissipated in the preparations for Foreign Minister's Conference between the US, the USSR, Britain, France, and Germany.<sup>11</sup> These talks also provided some opportunity for one of Khrushchev's key aims, high level bilateral talks with the U.S., involving "some questions worthy of examination."<sup>12</sup>

Such a brief summary of the November 1958 to May 1959 diplomatic events does not challenge conventional interpretations. We have to closely examine the original material on which the interpretations are based. The archival records and relevant historiography covering this Cold War diplomatic crisis reveal consistent evidence of bureaucratic conflict between the U.S. Defense and State Departments. Reports of the often awkward Western planning efforts for possible airlift and convoy operations show the difficulty of coordinating military action with the Allies.<sup>13</sup> Confusion and uncertainty over the effectiveness of force were principal reasons for choosing negotiations. Another reason was the essentially diplomatic foundation of the original 1945 agreements on Berlin. The Allied powers, in fact, made adherence to these agreements the cornerstone of their resistance and consistently referred to them in most communiqués and discussions among themselves.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the record provides copious examples of Dulles's emphasis on considering

force during Berlin II as an option of last resort. The evidence contradicts the image of Dulles as a “brinksmen” who aggravated tensions on all sides in Berlin II. Instead, he enforced a general discipline of diplomatic and military restraint. This was likely a pragmatic as much as a philosophical attitude, as though his calculated reasoning and reference points had told him this was the only practical option.<sup>15</sup> That discipline, of course, carried the ultimate authority of the President. Eisenhower succeeded at an important level in making the Soviet Premier wait at arms length another several months before getting his summit meeting. He used the seasoned coolness of Dulles and his deputies to ensure that there was a low risk of war. He did not want closer encounters with Khrushchev until the Soviet attitudes improved.

The most complete information in Berlin II comes from diplomatic rather than military documents. Still the fact that this is not a subject of open military history attests to diplomacy’s determining role in the crisis. Reconstructing the Berlin II events from the diplomatic record should test my revisionist contentions. These records cover the options outlined and policies set at Eisenhower’s direction in Washington and then transmitted by Dulles and his successor-in-training, Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter. Because Dulles took these policy decisions personally to Europe, the record also includes pivotal interactions with Allied leaders as well as their diplomats.

In daily practice over Berlin II’s six-month duration, the U.S. Embassy desks in Bonn, Moscow, London and Paris had to handle most of the contact and negotiations with allies and opponents. The American ambassadors in Europe’s key capitals provided Eisenhower’s key intelligence on the crisis. They bore much of the worst of the Soviet efforts at intimidation. Their dependable communications were invaluable to Dulles and to Eisenhower, and may even provide more authentic reflections of Berlin II than the better known formalized sessions of the

National Security Council (NSC).

The field cables, along with the policy planning staff records, NSC position papers, and miscellaneous letters and the like, can help us see why this was “a war that wasn’t”. It could have easily been otherwise had hotter heads prevailed. A reconstruction from November to May shows not only the signal points of restraint and the pressures that indicated caution, but also the efforts at compromise and constructive negotiations, not to enforce a Western-style reunification of Germany, but to maintain the relative peace Berlin had enjoyed for ten years. To begin this reconstruction, it is useful to look at the political situation in Berlin before Khrushchev’s November proposal and at trends in American and Soviet strategic doctrine.

### **Background to the Second Berlin Crisis**

Actual military confrontations leading to this period began with a rash of US-East German confrontations at Berlin inter-zonal checkpoints in August and September over inspection issues. These were minor but messy. On September 13, the East Germans detained a British Soldier at Helmstedt checkpoint, then transferred him to a Soviet car for delivery to Marienborn. There, he was released at the British checkpoint.<sup>16</sup> A West German man was beaten by the East Germans when he attempted to return to the U.S. sector at Dresdener Strasse crossing. An East German crowd gathered and interceded on the man’s behalf to help him escape; he took an East German truncheon with him but returned it, although the *volkspolizei* refused to return the man’s identification papers.<sup>17</sup> The continued exodus of East Germans through Berlin to the Western sectors and resettlement outside of the Communist domain caused a growing friction.<sup>18</sup> The loss of so many professional and skilled workers annoyed the East Germans, who started taking their frustrations out on hapless American soldiers. Khrushchev

recalled in his memoirs, “The resulting drain of workers was creating a simply disastrous situation.” He added, “If things had continued much longer like this, I don’t know what would have happened.”<sup>19</sup>

There was also a new element of tension due to the early 1958 deployments in both East and West Germany of theater range nuclear-tipped missiles. Inadvertent use of these weapons could escalate to the use of intercontinental nuclear weapons both nations were developing. An April protest by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko over U.S. U-2 overflights was an early indicator of Soviet jumpiness over the chance of accidental war.<sup>20</sup>

These pre-November access incidents are rarely emphasized in the historiography or even in the State Department collection, *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Yet, they were taken very seriously by the US mission in Bonn and in Washington. These incidents almost exclusively involved US personnel. While worrisome, they still did not directly suggest an imminent regional conflict. In fact, just a few weeks before the crisis, the NSC had approved a new master policy statement, for West Germany, Berlin, and East Germany. It did not anticipate any near-term change in Berlin’s status quo.<sup>21</sup> NSC 5803 reflected no change in inter-German relations. It put the blame for reunification’s stalled progress firmly at the Soviet door and expressed concern over the alternative concept of confederation. The report touted Berlin’s economic recovery and downplayed Communist provocations as diversions to aid East German morale and Walter Ulbricht’s power. NSC 5803 did not anticipate active, imminent conflict over Berlin. Only two active-response strategic options were discussed: nuclear deterrence and small-scale conventional war. Soviet efforts to transfer occupational authority to the GDR were dismissed as a propaganda effort more than a diplomatic problem.<sup>22</sup>

Even though Germany did not loom as an expected theater of war in mid-1958, Dulles

had already been studying concepts of limited war with nuclear weapons. A July 3, 1957 memo from State Department Policy Planning Staff (PPS) director Gerard Smith to his PPS colleague Elgon Matthews noted that Secretary Dulles was impatient with Defense limited-war papers. Dulles thought “military matters should be an instrument of political policy and not vice versa.” Smith also thought the Secretary’s thinking was becoming “more fluid”, seen in his disagreement with the military doctrine that limited war capacity varied directly with total war capacity.<sup>23</sup> These memo records may refer to the “The Philosophy of Limited War”, a brief for a meeting of State’s Army Policy Council dated 9 October, 1957. This paper is notable for its references to the influence of private strategists Robert Osgood and Henry Kissinger, and because of the way it defines the terms limited war: “one in which...one or more restrictions applies in some degree”.<sup>24</sup>

Despite his own earlier hawkishness, Dulles had become impatient with those who refused to consider the inherent limits of particular conflicts. Germany was such a case. Dulles was becoming increasingly aware that the threat of war was often more constraining than anticipated. He had little confidence in the feasibility of limiting nuclear combat. The new private strategists like Kissinger chided Dulles’ overreliance on massive assured destruction.<sup>25</sup> But he was skeptical of their optimistic scenarios of using tactical nuclear force. He understood how rapidly a local war could spark a general war. The Eisenhower administration had already avoided intervention in several limited wars, notably in Suez and Hungary in 1956.

Private debate over defense force structure and spending, such as the ideas emanating from the Council for Foreign Relations and the Gaither Committee’s panel on limited war, did have some influence on American strategic policy. America’s ability to project force remained a topic of much discussion. By the next year’s Fourth of July, 1958, Smith and Matthews were

preparing yet another updated set of limited war acts options, this time explicitly incorporating nuclear capabilities. Days before, Defense officials had optimistically estimated that limited nuclear exchanges would last no more than 30-60 days.<sup>26</sup> But under questioning, they admitted that these estimates had not been based on the certain probability of in-kind retaliation. Their estimates were too limited to be practical.

Speculations and scenarios about possible small wars were still largely theoretical in 1958 though. Limited wars seemed more likely in post-colonial hostile situations. The U.S. did not yet have any large scale voluntary involvements in post-colonial regions, such as Indochina. Deployments in response to unexpected provocation were the exception rather than the rule. The few military interventions Eisenhower had approved were intended to be demonstrations of surgical precision, like the deployment of the U.S. Army and Marines to Lebanon. Laos was beginning to loom as a possible new theater of combat, but Germany seemed an improbable battleground.

### **The Russian Challenge (November 1958)**

Several incidents in September involving inspections at border checkpoints may have forecasted increased hostilities over Berlin. These were apparently instigated by the East German *volkspolizei* with a least tacit Soviet approval. A message from Ambassador David Bruce to Dulles on September 2 details a proposed note, planned in conjunction with the British and French, to the Soviets, “bring to your attention serious situation concerning life in this city...(re) measures now being imposed” by permitting them, the Soviet authorities are deepening the division of Germany.”<sup>27</sup> The same day, an American soldier had his camera taken at an inspection point by the *vopos*. He struck back at a *vopo* who then, in pursuit of the soldier

crossed the checkpoint barrier into the West. When told by the West Germans that he was now on their territory, the East German fled back across the border with the American's camera.<sup>28</sup>

Further tripartite meeting summaries reveal that such harassment had become an ongoing problem. British Foreign Service counselor Peter Wilkinson observed, "unless we were prepared to submit to Soviet inspection procedures, we will probably be blockading ourselves in Berlin."<sup>29</sup> At a meeting with acting Soviet political advisor Shilov two days later, the U.S. embassy's legal counselor Bernard Gufler "emphasized increasing brutality of Soviet sector police." Shilov replied that, "this was a matter entirely outside Soviet competence". He then cited a similar incident the previous month as evidence of the Soviet distancing themselves from responsibility for security in Berlin. When the US advisor inquired whether Shilov's statement constituted definite unilateral abrogation of Soviet obligation to protect members Western allied forces while in East Berlin, Shilov answered affirmatively. He said he "could not use influence to return camera, matter out of his control."<sup>30</sup> A few days later in quadripartite (US/Britain/France/FRG) meetings the chairman, West Germany's Dr. Northe stated that the "Germans were impressed with apparent confusion in GDR circles on East German prerogatives re controlling passage into East German enclave."<sup>31</sup> There may have been a slight breakdown between responsible East German and Soviet diplomatic and military authorities. The provocations were mainly against Allied military personnel. But there was no clear chain of command for the West to address. The situation had neither a ready military nor diplomatic remedy.

At this point, Dulles sent the Bonn mission an excerpt from his September 9 news conference, which he directed to be forwarded to West Berlin mayor Willy Brandt. Brandt queried Dulles: "Mr. Secretary, is it a fair understanding that ...you and the President regarded

the threat of aggression in Quemoy and Matsu equal to the threat to the Western World in Berlin and...are we again prepared to resist aggression?" Dulles replied: "...the two situations are comparable...Perhaps Berlin is another example of a forward position which...could not be lost in the face of a frontal attack without consequences which were unacceptable."<sup>32</sup> His comments may not have been directly related to these developments but the cable record shows he was informed about the checkpoint incidents, and his message may have been a signal that the State Department would not allow provocations to go unchallenged.

Unfortunately, the situation did continue to deteriorate at the local level, chiefly because of East German efforts during August and September 1958 to incorporate the neighborhood of Steinstuecken into their jurisdiction. This de facto redrawing of the deeply entrenched Potsdam-authorized borders was a serious concern in its own right, magnified because of the unstable inspection and checkpoint climate. In a message of concern from the embassy to Dulles and other missions and military installations, Bruce specifically emphasized that, "approval for the use of armed forces must emanate from the highest level of the US government." He also noted that "the time required to obtain this authority after an act of aggression would preclude effective and timely reaction on the part of the US in Steinestucken." Despite the dilemma of needing to be able to 'take immediate action with...deliberate violations,' he stated forcefully that "repeat not think it essential USCOB be given prior and unconditional authority to undertake military action..." He concluded pessimistically that "one constant factor is that there is no REPEAT no stable modus vivendi in Berlin...only proposal might improve situation would be (if) generally known that if incursion took place US armed force would be used to restore situation." Bruce concluded, "for all practical purposes, our position is not such we can improve it fundamentally from military standpoint. ...situation hardly conducive to that."<sup>33</sup> However, over some



objections from both Allies and the JCS, Dulles would only consider possibly conducting a light “garrison” airlift of essential military and diplomatic personnel and materiel.

A more serious interruption took place on October 8 at Marienborn checkpoint when Soviet, not East German, guards detained a large US truck and its driver. Bernard Gufler protested to the new Soviet political advisor Colonel Dimitri Markushkin. Markushkin’s frequent cooperation with Bruce was generally a great asset to both sides all through Berlin II. Though Markushkin could also be unhelpful when his superiors so directed, he helped in this case. The truck was released the same day. The Steinestuecken dispute continued to occupy much of the US mission’s attention particularly from October 22 to 28.<sup>34</sup>

On November 23, Ambassador David Bruce issued general instructions that no inspection challenges, unauthorized convoys, or retaliations of any kind were to be attempted by US personnel. He concluded with this sobering caution: “any course of action designed to maintain freedom of Berlin will finally depend upon our determination, if necessary to use force.”<sup>35</sup> Fortunately, the tensions in Berlin had generally been tolerable enough that diplomats and soldiers alike were able to retain discipline. There were other factors encouraging diplomatic resolution, not least of which was that the Soviets were already floating revisionist interpretations about alleged military guarantees of occupational jurisdiction. This provided the West with grounds for delay and request for clarification. The tension was real enough for both sides to welcome the postponements of diplomatic protocol instead of expensive battles. There were plenty of reasons not to ruin Germany again so soon.

Contingency planning for armed combat over Berlin and along the inter-German borders was challenging for both the US and USSR. Restrictions included the necessity to limit collateral damage to civilians, economic assets, and infrastructure. Both sides may have been

reluctant to expend men and resources on a general scale. A confined war zone could nullify many force advantages. Still, the USSR's *in situ* advantages in conventional war assets were well understood and discouraging.<sup>36</sup> The Americans would be limited by their inability to match and mobilize conventional assets into the region quickly. Military targets for all parties would have to be selective to avoid alienating the population into riots which could spread abroad. The Soviets had had an awkward time in both Poland and in Hungary in 1956. Their relations with the East Germans had been strained ever since 1953. Consultations with European allies in the days after Khrushchev's November 10 preview speech, reported from the Moscow Sports Palace, indicated wide divergence of opinion about practical options.<sup>37</sup> The conflicts and tensions in the Allied camp continued over the next six months. These proved nearly as destabilizing as Khrushchev's bold ultimata. If another of Khrushchev's aims, besides summit talks with the U.S., was to sow dissension among the American, French, British and West Germans, he succeeded royally. Allied unity was a greater priority for the United States than a war to affect German reunification

What were Khrushchev's other aims, besides discord and a summit, and would they limit his tactics? Not even his fellow Russians knew.<sup>38</sup> Certainly he did not want a total war, and probably not even limited war. He had not been pleased with the few limited war situations the Soviet had gotten embroiled in on his watch. Like Eisenhower, he had trimmed conventional bases and forces and even moderated heavy arms purchasing. But, he also needed to preserve a conventional strike capability and to keep cost and deterrence manageable.<sup>39</sup> The Soviet force in East Germany had to include theater nuclear weapons requested by Ulbricht. In the near term, he also needed to mollify Ulbricht, who was losing control over Berlin as thousands of educated workers fled west. German unification had essentially been a moot question since the

establishment of the German Democratic Republic and Warsaw Pact and the growing viability of West Germany as a renewed commercial and political power. A divided Germany was dissatisfying but it was sustainable.

Khrushchev's surprise proposals new German settlement, particularly regarding Berlin, may not have been realistic, but they did have political advantages. Ulbricht's complaints about the drain of human resources from Berlin to the West had to be addressed.<sup>40</sup> And, Berlin was the one place where Russia and the Western Powers were all still in close contact.

By focusing his challenge there, Khrushchev could also advance several domestic and Communist-sphere aims, including intimidating the new Politburo.<sup>41</sup> In challenging the Potsdam agreement, he could challenge the final European judgment of the War, while vaguely seeming to be trying to restore German peace. Berlin was increasingly viewed by both the Americans and Russians as symbolic but dysfunctional. Eisenhower called it "a mere relic of history." It was a safe target for political provocation. Berlin would be especially attractive if it could be acquired without any danger to the Cold War landscape. He hoped it might be worth a U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit meeting to Eisenhower as ransom for continued access. Culturally sensitive and functionally superfluous, it could be demanded without disrupting more essential commerce and contact. The Warsaw Pact countries could be brought forth as diplomatic partners. Khrushchev must have known that Eastern European interlocutions would especially discomfit the West European allies, who had tried to avoid East European initiatives like the Polish Rapacki plan.<sup>42</sup>

The new Moscow Politburo, finally purged of most of his rivals and old-line Stalinists and now generally ignored, was astounded, bewildered, and inertly angry.<sup>43</sup> Premier Khrushchev's impulsiveness had gone beyond the internal Russian upset of de-Stalinization to a whole new level of international mischief that might be dangerously unsustainable. But he did

have control over his foreign policy apparatus. Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko executed his policy with determination and little disagreement.<sup>44</sup>

The grand sweep of the whole ambition as well as its tough language was also seen as a challenge to Red China's Chairman Mao Tse Tung. His Chinese rival had recently tested the Western presence in the Far East and otherwise liked to taunt Khrushchev. Soviet era historian Roy Medvedev reflects a common impression in Russia that Mao's offshore island attacks were really aimed at Moscow as much as they were at Washington.<sup>45</sup> Post-Soviet Russian historians Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, who stress the Sino-Soviet rivalry in Khrushchev's decision making, have pointed out that Ulbricht had heard Dulles' recent comparisons the Chinese offshore island situation with Berlin. In October 1958, possibly to goad Khrushchev, Ulbricht suggested the next issue of superpower contention might be Berlin's status.<sup>46</sup>

For the Americans, President Eisenhower was indeed dubious over Berlin's strategic value and not at all inclined to summitry with Khrushchev.<sup>47</sup> He regarded the previous summit of 1955 as a failure. Though this was the first post-war U.S. –U.S.S.R summit, it had not been productive. He remained bitter over Khrushchev's subsequent abrogation of summit promises in both Poland and Hungary, as well as his interference in the Suez crisis.<sup>48</sup> Eisenhower believed in executive authority but also delegation of command. His "New Look" policy aimed to replace expensive "containment" strategy with a leaner, more responsive defense capacity. He wanted to eliminate costly self-perpetuating bureaucracies and force redundancies. He was disinclined to wholesale weapons system purchases premised on suspect intelligence.<sup>49</sup>

This economical approach to maintaining sufficient defense assets demanded a flexible foreign policy that looked to negotiation in crisis situations. To avoid such interventions, a reliably subordinate security establishment was required. Stephen Ambrose has described the

President as an advocate for military caution and limits. More recent examinations of Eisenhower strategic policy such as Bowie and Immerman's *Waging Peace* have further argued that the "Ike" White House was systematically inclined to restraint and prudence. The President was averse to military risk-taking and committed U.S. forces carefully, if at all.<sup>50</sup>

Eisenhower did not regard the State and Defense Departments as rivals but rather as equally subordinate institutions. Bureaucratization - whether at State or Defense - added a deadly inertia and drag on decision making.<sup>51</sup> That could slow presidential authority unless an expeditor like Dulles could whip and cajole Washington's security fiefdoms into cooperation.

By 1958, Eisenhower had the advantage of a sound grasp of Dulles' basic geopolitical instincts. After earlier heated experiences and disagreements, they were well seasoned and understood each other.<sup>52</sup> Their instincts about the Berlin situation were very similar. Both men thought this was an indirect maneuver by Khrushchev, who had forecast and loudly proclaimed his moves. The Kremlin leader established an extended timeline of six months, instead of simply occupying all of Berlin as a *fait accompli*. But Eisenhower was also under considerable political pressure from Congressional leaders wanting a more aggressive U.S. reaction. Their martial allies such as columnist Joseph Alsop and strategist Walter Rostow advocated action.<sup>53</sup>

Khrushchev didn't have to worry much about columnists or disgruntled maverick allies, notwithstanding Ulbricht's nagging or wayward Yugoslav Marshal Tito's taunts. The Washington and Western European newspapers were able to use the symbolic cause of Berlin and endangered allies as leverage to shape public pressure for a hard military response. Eisenhower's relations with his principal European allies were already somewhat formal and cold. The French and British remained particularly distant over his surprising lack of support for Suez and their other failed colonial ventures.<sup>54</sup>

While DeGaulle and Macmillan actively involved themselves in the negotiations, Eisenhower, with confidence, delegated much of the US response to John Foster Dulles. As Secretary of State from Eisenhower's inauguration till his death from cancer in May 1959, Dulles enjoyed considerable leeway in carrying out policy yet could faithfully execute presidential directives. His opinion was valued, though he had had disagreements with Eisenhower over Suez and Hungary. By 1958 his views were becoming congruent with the President's.<sup>55</sup> At least in the preserved diplomatic record, there is little indication of divergence or disagreement between the President and Secretary over the U.S. response to Khrushchev's proposals for a new German settlement.

Another reason for the executive branch's preference for diplomatic resolution was conflict between the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy was a weak partner of the Chiefs more than he was a forceful leader like Dulles. McElroy could not lobby for his Department or for the JCS as effectively Dulles did for the State Department.<sup>56</sup> The State Department's "Militarization of Foreign Policy" noted the Defense Department's divergent security goals and resistance to Eisenhower's "New Look" drawdown and streamlining of American defense positions.<sup>57</sup> That growing conflict between the State Department and the Joint Chiefs (and disagreements between the various Chiefs themselves) represented an unacceptable threat to presidential control over negotiations. The diplomatic table, not Berlin and Germany, had to serve as the field of battle, with the nuclear backup kept both ready and contained.

Though the U.S. and U.S.S.R. ultimately achieved some political resolution without escalation to general conflict. This coldest of Cold War conflicts had to be conducted at the diplomatic level because the operating limits and resultant options for both sides were so

restrictive.<sup>58</sup> Military confrontations consisted of only a few East German and Soviet detentions of U.S. soldiers and vehicles over inspection rights.<sup>59</sup> These were usually resolved through the Soviet political aide Dmitri Markushkin.

One indication of differences between State and Defense in the initial reaction period came from Undersecretary of State Livingston Merchant. He wrote concerning an interruption on November 14, 1958 of an American military convoy at the Soviet checkpoint “Babelsberg” in Berlin. Merchant noted that such harassment had become chronic. Merchant stressed that the Bonn mission and the Department agreed that “this is the wrong time, place, and issue on which to resort to force.”<sup>60</sup> But he discouraged plans for a full scale airlift as too visible a military commitment. He did mention again the possibility for a light garrison airlift.

He summarized topics of a meeting with the JCS as: Soviet determination to inspect American trucks; allied reluctance to actually use force, prospects for further allied disunity, and efforts to restore unity. The considerable Soviet surface advantages were discussed as well as the “awkward” American staging environment. Merchant added that the JCS were firmly against a new airlift but also committed to defense of convoys by force: “The JCS are following two lines of thinking that cause us considerable concern.”<sup>61</sup> The Merchant memo shows the rough frontier between military and diplomatic positions in Washington.

In Berlin, State Department staffers Finlay Burns and Bernard Gufler were seriously pursuing the “little airlift” option which appealed to the allies as well. This is significant because it shows the diplomatic corps taking the leadership regarding the degree of force to be used. It was remarked at the time that detentions were almost always targeted against the Americans and with full Soviet oversight.<sup>62</sup> It also seemed as though the Soviet military and diplomatic groups were not always in full communication.

Khrushchev cast his November 10 and 28 proposals as a timetable for Berlin to become a demilitarized “free city.”<sup>63</sup> It was a surprise move, even given the hostilities over Steinestuecken. A useful example of the Soviet’s calculated retrenchment into seemingly reasonable proposals that would prove onerous to the West was the improbable “Free City” concept, which Khrushchev claimed as his own innovation.<sup>64</sup> The “Free City” idea vaguely evoked the peaceful transition Vienna had made from an occupied city to a neutral capital. In Vienna, however, the Soviets had really had little reason to continue their occupation. In Berlin they were naturally dominant, and easily able to maintain nearly four times as many troops as the Americans had.

The real significance of his “free city” proposal may have been its non-military format, delivered as a diplomatic message. The Soviets probably expected to be replied to in the same way. Here were no lightning thrusts such as the Soviets had done in Hungary, or their Egyptian clients had at Suez. This was a long-course diplomatic challenge, yet with a potential nuclear warning. This diplomatic course was likely chosen because it was less hazardous or expensive than military options. As Khrushchev told his son Sergei after the second speech, “No one would start a war over Berlin...if negotiations don’t work, something will turn up.”<sup>65</sup>

### **The US & Allied Response (December 1958)**

In December, Gerard Smith summarized a briefing led by Defense Secretary McElroy as an indication that “in the immediate future the U.S. military capacity for meeting limited aggression would rapidly decline.” Smith added that it was “likely be number of situations in which a strong foreign policy position will be difficult to maintain...” He stressed the “necessity for strengthening our limited war capabilities”.<sup>66</sup> To avoid accidental escalation into total war



and still pursue their respective interests, both sides confined their challenges to official notes and speeches. They resisted more than token military activity. But in November and December, it was still unclear whether or not the crisis could be contained diplomatically.

This meant containment of destabilizing military activity. In mid-December, retired General Lucius Clay, who as CINCEUR in 1949, had masterminded the original Berlin airlift, promoted the idea of an armed convoy from West Germany to Berlin.<sup>67</sup> This option was endorsed by the French and West Germans but was directly overruled by Dulles, who was relaying the President's wishes.<sup>68</sup> Eisenhower had no intention of conducting another full scale airlift. This would have likely only provoked Khrushchev to take more forceful measures. By preserving the status quo as much as possible, Khrushchev's challenge was diminished. He would then have trouble credibly accomplishing his indirect aims at Peking and Washington.

Throughout, the basic centrality of Germany to the crisis was more in German eyes, East and West, than to the other allied nations. France and Britain considered Khrushchev's proposal a challenge to them as much as to the Germans. A unified Germany would diminish their place in the new European system. Not that Berliners were particularly pleased with the status quo. As the West German Interior Minister Joachim Lipschutz emphatically told the American military journal *Combat* in December, the Germans were open to a new political situation but not under Soviet ultimatum.<sup>69</sup> To the Soviets, their role as victors over Germany and guarantors of the European settlement was a cornerstone of their international stature. They still considered Berlin, Potsdam notwithstanding, as their rightful prize. However, both the East and West German government governments had eagerly sought and received the first installations of theater range nuclear missiles.<sup>70</sup> The rearmament of Germany prompted the Soviets to confirm

their leadership – and maybe even protect their western flank - by calling for demilitarization in Berlin and later for all of Germany.

Soviet primacy in German occupation matters had to be reasserted against the new nuclear backdrop. Soviet military doctrine had come to regard nuclear weaponry as indispensable for the time being. But their leadership was beginning to acknowledge its risks.<sup>71</sup> Tactical nuclear missile deployment was still controversial in America and in the Soviet Union. Advocacy of tactical nuclear weapons deployment had to be considered alongside arguments against America placing its main reliance on the unpredictable nuclear strategies. The latter “examined the political costs of initiating the use of nuclear options and have found them very substantial.”<sup>72</sup> Unwilling to encourage military proposals for Berlin, Dulles turned down General Lucius Clay’s request for an interview before his departure for a mid-December NATO Foreign Minister meeting.<sup>73</sup> Acting Secretary Herter’s brief from Washington in advance of the Dulles trip did provide some window for possible military action. Herter observed that “Soviets and East Germans should not be allowed to entertain doubts as to our determination to use limited force if need be...” He emphasized that the “purpose of (such) resort to is...test Soviet intentions”<sup>74</sup>

Ambassador David Bruce had recently reported that even amidst Adenauer’s resolve to “take a firm position,” other extenuating factors needed to be evaluated first. These included the possibility that Khrushchev was trying to deflect attention from internal difficulties in Russia as well as trying to impress the upcoming All Party Conference. Adenauer also suggested that Khrushchev was acting out of frustration at West German influence with DeGaulle in the wake of disappointment about unaccepted Soviet advances to DeGaulle since the previous May.<sup>75</sup> Adenauer and Lipschutz had little to say about how firmness would translate to force projections

or defensive positions.

Unsatisfactory practical applications of conventional power were often based on naively assumptions. Military plans for political goals often underestimated predictable problems. Eisenhower was determined to avoid being ensnared in a dangerous quagmire over dubious territory. The President had deep reservations about Berlin's worth. He told Dulles: "This was another instance in which our political posture requires us to assume military positions which are wholly illogical".<sup>76</sup> At the NATO conference, Dulles basically laid down the law: The United States would not support unauthorized military ventures or even full scale planning or deployment and they would consider Khrushchev's proposals at face value. Eisenhower and Dulles both thought that the Soviet leader's own positions could be used against him.

Dulles willingness to discuss compromises with the Soviets disturbed the Allies, particularly DeGaulle.<sup>77</sup> This resistance did not prevent communiqués from NATO on December 15 and 18<sup>th</sup>. The final communiqué asserted resolve "not to yield to threats." The Allies also indicated they too sought a 'solution to seek just settlements of the German problem...' This would include "European Security arrangements... (and)...controlled disarmament."<sup>78</sup> The US cover statement left no doubt that Dulles was acting at Eisenhower's direction; "The President reiterated our ... firm purpose" as a Four Power guarantor of Berlin's freedom.<sup>79</sup> After these communiqués, though there was a period of apparent relaxation, with some hints from Soviet aides that there was not likely to be any war over Berlin.

### **A Hard Soviet Reply and Strains on Allied Restraint (January-February 1959)**

In January, Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan visited Washington, ostensibly on vacation and to renew trade discussions . On January 10, he delivered a more forceful reply than the

Americans probably expected. He presented an expanded version of the November proposals that now included calls for a possible demilitarized unified German settlement. He made it clear to Dulles that the Soviets had problems with the U.S. in non-German matters, particularly the possible U.S. bases being planned for Turkey and Iran.<sup>80</sup> In private talks with the President the next day, Mikoyan was particularly strident on the subject of West German nuclear deployment.<sup>81</sup> But the Americans simply asked Mikoyan in return if the Soviets were really ready for open elections in Germany. They received no direct answer from Mikoyan, who simply repeated the official concerns about nuclear encirclement and intent to resist such containment.

Whether that was the Soviets' main worry or not, the issue of Western nuclear threat made a useful cover for other issues between the Americans and the Russians. The Soviets' expansion of the problem from Berlin to Germany as a whole renewed the confusion among the allies. The U.S. had trouble in getting them to develop a coordinated practical response beyond simple public declarations of firmness.

Although nearly too ill to travel from his worsening cancer, Dulles nevertheless returned to Europe for consultations with the other foreign ministers. However, almost as soon as he arrived, another serious incident occurred, involving a more extended detention. This again required Markushkin's assistance after direct entreaties to Soviet Commander Shilov were ignored. The incident also revealed some dissonance between the Soviet military and political authorities in Berlin. On February 2, the Soviets detained an American truck convoy on the *autobahn*, which allegedly refused inspection. The complaint was somewhat dubious since the rear of the trucks was open and the contents - jeeps - were plainly visible. The British also suffered a detention the next day.<sup>82</sup> In each case, the soldiers were not detained but the vehicles were, suggesting a nuanced attempt at deliberate provocation. Bruce wired Dulles that "this is an

obvious move to force inspection rights”<sup>83</sup> In his next-day follow-up, he noted that “we either submit to any inspection demand or resort to self-imposed blockade”.<sup>84</sup>

This was the most serious actual military contact of Berlin II and luckily –or perhaps by design – it did not occur at a point where armed hostilities were likely to flare up. Inspection checkpoints are defensive more than forward positions. The US vehicles were minimally armed. The detention is conspicuously marginal in even the most references and summaries regarding Berlin II, but it was of serious concern at the time to the US and British embassies. The French offered to run some trucks through instead. Although Bruce considered the suggestion “worth considering,” it was not followed up on. Perhaps they were concerned about escalating the incident. As brinksmanship goes, it was not a particularly saber-rattling moment. General Lewis Norstad, US NATO commandant, presented a plan for five light tanks to test the checkpoint. This would be followed by a reinforcement battalion of light infantry.

But this escalatory idea was deferred in favor of Bruce’s appeal to Markushin. Bruce and Markushin visited the site, and after Bruce demonstrated that only a jeep was being transported, Markushin replied: “It is cold. I will not detain you further...” He added, “you and I are not able to settle the issues involved. It must be taken to a higher level.”<sup>85</sup> Markushin also let him know the release was a personal favor. The inspection issue was still open.

Coincidentally, a February 5, PPS memo says that a precedent of U.S. restraint established in the Quemoy/Matsu incidents was being continued in the current German situation. This memo also outlines State’s general strategy of taking the Soviets’ own proposals, such as free elections, to the table at a foreign minister’s conference. There they could see if these were bluffs or not. The guess was that Ulbricht actually welcomed the prospect little more than Konrad Adenauer did. And, use of force could likely be postponed indefinitely.<sup>86</sup>

Before higher level discussions with the Soviets could resume, the Allies needed to develop a joint approach. Dulles had to analyze what the Soviet actions were really about. His first stop was London where he was surprised to find that Prime Minister Sir Harold Macmillan and Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd had a much “softer” attitude than the U.S. expected.<sup>87</sup> While the US had surprised the Allies in December with their flexibility, the U.S. was still not prepared to recognize the GDR, especially since the Soviets were not going to recognize the FRG. While still in London, Dulles also met with Norstad and raised the question of how garrisoning nuclear weapons in Germany would affect understandings with other allies. Norstad noted that it was a major step but also cautioned against putting the move up for approval with the other nations. He also complained of delays in deployments. Undersecretary Livingston Merchant commented that the “Rubicon with the Soviets will be crossed when the Soviets get atomic weapons”<sup>88</sup> The Soviets did not have to go far forward to do that.

At the next day’s round, Dulles stated that he was convinced that the Soviets did not want to go war over Berlin. The Allies had to be careful not to back them into changing that position. He also reiterated his opposition to any “thinning out” of forces without corresponding moves from the opposition. But most significantly a diplomatic solution to the crisis began to surface with discussion of a Foreign Ministers conference, possibly as early as May. Macmillan now made public his intent to engage in his own personal shuttle diplomacy, including a trip to Moscow. That prospect left both Dulles and Eisenhower aghast with disbelief.<sup>89</sup>

Fortunately, Dulles found French President Charles De Gaulle and Prime Minister Regis Debre less shaky. Ever the effective diplomat, Dulles pleased DeGaulle with his reference to the France’s role as a victorious occupying power in Berlin. He knew that DeGaulle resented the erosion of tripartite prestige after French blunders in Suez and Indochina. It is interesting that

Dulles also referred to a problem we now call the “leverage of the weak” when he says “we could not permit...the vanquished to...rule the victors.”<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, though, Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson cabled Dulles from Moscow to advise that raising the inspection problem either tripartitely or unilaterally with the Soviets would be “disastrous.” He added that the Soviets would back off if not pressed to avoid further harsh publicity.<sup>91</sup> Further talks with the French now went smoothly, emphasizing the economic cooperation between France and the FRG as a natural basis for influence, without Dulles having to make unsupportable concessions to the French.

Dulles’ next stop in Germany would be more troubling. Chancellor Adenauer frankly described his apprehensions about Western unity and NATO’s will and ability to stand up to Soviet backed aggression. He wanted specific commitments from Dulles. Dulles replied that in the event of serious armed incursion, the West must be prepared to dispatch an armored division to secure a land route to Berlin. He stated further that such a condition would equate to general war situation where the allies must consider the use nuclear weaponry. Failure to appear capable of such commitment would “invite defeat on a purely conventional battleground.”<sup>92</sup> Adenauer replied that he feared there was little public support for such scenarios. Dulles assured him that there was indeed such public will in the United States. Dulles also contrasted the US position with the softer British views and harder French view, and asked what the West German thoughts were for a provisional resolution. Adenauer wanted the deadline postponed and NATO’s planned mission extended.<sup>93</sup>

Explicitly committed to forceful resistance as Dulles was with Adenauer, he remained non-confrontational with the Soviets. Dulles was serious in his commitment to Adenauer. But his reassurances that the U.S. would not bargain its ally away were matched by his continuing

determination to avoid war. The inspection issue was then effectively sidelined for the time being by the use of sealed supply trains instead of the more ostentatious convoys.<sup>94</sup> Dulles impressed Adenauer with his perseverance on West Germany's behalf in the face of his obvious physical pain.<sup>95</sup> The Secretary then returned to Washington with some confidence that the alliance had been effectively shored up. He was, however, soon back in the hospital, and Acting Secretary Christian Herter began to assume full time responsibility for crisis management.

### **Compromises Emerge (March and early April 1959)**

Dulles' efforts for Allied unity were well received by Eisenhower, whereas Macmillan's solo diplomacy renewed concerns. Inter-zonal friction continued to simmer but involved no new important disputes. The Soviets did reassert their "rights of inspection", but conveyed this by diplomatic messages, which the Americans countered by referring back to the original occupation agreements.<sup>96</sup> The British and French were willing to cede leadership on the issue to the Americans. A possible additional option, a passive embargo dubbed a "pacific counter-blockade" was presented to Herter but only limited actual contingency planning was initiated.<sup>97</sup> Herter now had to consider just how onerous the agency principle might be in the case of document stamping by GDR replacements at Soviet checkpoints. Herter, with State's legal counsel concurring, was unwilling to entertain full stamping authority. Since that would be *de facto* recognition of GDR authority, such a possibility was being very quietly considered.<sup>98</sup> There was still a very good chance that the Soviets would make good on their ultimatum.

With Dulles incapacitated in the hospital, American military advocates for a more forceful response saw an opportunity to make their case anew. On March 13, Herter and his staff held a meeting on Berlin contingency planning with Secretary McElroy, his deputy Donald



Quarles, General Nathan F. Twining, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, White House JCS liaison, Brigadier General Andrew J. Goodpaster ; and representatives of each service. The military wanted to clarify reports they had gotten on a State Department meeting the day before. They told Herter they were very concerned about plans for the cut-off point (May 27) and also about his statement that in no circumstances should the US initiate general war. Herter explained to the Chiefs' satisfaction that the policy remained the same: to leave military options open but to be resorted to only in the event of the situation deteriorating to point of no return.

However, signs of conflict soon appeared. McElroy and Twining belittled continuing the limited-use of force policy as being of no deterrent value, with Twining even opining , “we have the capability to lick the East Germans”. McElroy also was concerned about getting ensnared in fighting satellites with the Soviet armed forces so close at hand. The JCS protested laxity in preparedness in the US European and NATO allies' forces. Twining presented a long list of more forceful recommendations, including a large scale deployment of 7,000 troops to Europe. McElroy overruled that idea which the President would veto as a waste of strength. Macmillan's pilgrimage to Moscow had also stirred up the JCS.<sup>99</sup>

Diplomatic and legal alternatives to military force had created their own difficulties. Skeptical hopes for assistance from the UN in stamping cases were answered with plans to refer cases to the International Court of Justice.<sup>100</sup> While the stamping issue seems arcane in many ways today, it was then crucial in cross-border transfers of any kind. A deadlock in stamping would seal the borders. Such a standoff was potentially destabilizing enough to worry everybody but Walter Ulbricht who was still hoping for escalation. The UN had been of only peripheral assistance in resolving the crisis anyway. UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld's reluctance during the worst of the crisis to take sides cost the UN any role in negotiations or the

Foreign Minister's conference. The US mission in Berlin also had to contend with a protest from the Soviets about armed "escorts" dispatched by the US Army to observe convoys.<sup>101</sup>

Negotiations with the Soviets towards the Foreign Minister's Conference were fitful. The Soviets preferred a specific German settlement conference and/or a summit meeting with the United States

Macmillan was still worried, though for his own political reasons. He had taken Eden's seat after the failures of Suez and knew he could be just as vulnerable himself. However, he had made good on his intent to visit Moscow. It was an uncomfortable visit. Khrushchev stood him up so to entertain visiting Iraqis (who had recently overthrown a British-backed king in Baghdad). He then taunted the Prime Minister at official dinners and generally subjected him to a very public display of how far British foreign influence had diminished. Khrushchev did take the opportunity to lift his May 28 deadline, though it is unlikely that that decision was hastened by Macmillan's visit. Still, Macmillan had mollified the Russian leader somewhat with praises of Khrushchev's war record as political commissar and supply expeditor. Macmillan's message was sufficiently pious and benign to assure Khrushchev that Britain was no threat in this matter.

Macmillan, along with British Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd and Ambassador Harold Caccia briefed Herter in Washington within days. The Foreign Minister's conference now seemed a certainty, and on many points the British and the US attitudes were agreeable. Herter and Eisenhower easily deflected Macmillan's suggestion that the most effective course would be to actually negotiate with Khrushchev, which was, of course, not on the US agenda at all.<sup>102</sup>

When Macmillan reported on what seemed to him certainly a great step forward, Eisenhower congratulated him for his good intentions and determination. But when he visited the ailing John Foster Dulles, the Prime Minister got a very undiplomatic appraisal of how dangerously naive

such solo diplomacy might prove.<sup>103</sup>

In the wake of Macmillan's visit, Herter received the first rumblings of the next challenge. Polish and Czech envoys were demanding conference participation equal to Britain, Germany, and France. Herter matter of factly expressed his doubts as to Soviet good faith and the follies of dividing the world arbitrarily into "two hostile camps."<sup>104</sup> Then on March 30 in Moscow, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko hand-delivered the Soviet endorsement of the East European bids to Thompson at the US embassy in Moscow. The good news was that the Soviets were officially acknowledging the imminence of the conference; the bad news was that the Soviets were not letting the West off the hook as easily had been hoped.<sup>105</sup> The Soviets were officially demanding full participation for the Poles and Czechs, and even made reference to their status as victims of Hitler's Germany, a neat reversal of the Allied invocation of World War II era legal precedents. In fact, Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson wrote candidly to Undersecretary Livingston Merchant that the Soviets were no longer chiefly concerned with German reunification, but might still be ready to harden their line across Europe and seek negotiations on a broader level. Despite the recent gains, Thompson concluded that "the present outlook seems to be a gloomy one."<sup>106</sup>

### **Arranging and Conducting a Foreign Minister's Conference (late April-May 1959)**

Allied relations continued to improve in the weeks leading up to Foreign Minister's Conference. The April 18 quadripartite meeting was less tense than January's sessions when deep mistrusts existed among all four camps.<sup>107</sup> General Norstad suggested that the US lead joint tripartite and NATO contingency planning dubbed "Live Oak," with direct intermediary command being delegated to British and French commanders. Live Oak planning would actually

end up outlasting the May deadline as a new framework for ongoing Berlin contingency planning. Simultaneously with Live Oak planning the President had directed State's Policy Planning Staff to prepare a set of non-force alternative options. These plans compared use-of-force situations, i.e convoys, airlifts, naval actions, etc. with their probable outcomes, i.e. "free world" reaction, "bloc" reaction, and general conclusions, which lead to escalation in every situation.<sup>108</sup>

The briefing book prepared for the conference provides a good picture of the US agenda. Primary goals included, "standing firm against pressure...stabilizing military situation...effecting retraction of Soviet power...ascertaining Soviet intentions... furthering substantive agreements...relaxation of intentions."<sup>109</sup> These are adaptive tactics, not proactive initiatives. It is very significant however that the only topics listed for discussion concerned Berlin and Germany.<sup>110</sup> The instructions to delegates are enumerated very specifically along with specific references to limited and general war potentials,, as well as intelligence opportunities, in their briefings. Acting Secretary Herter wrote Merchant, "we are concentrating on the wrong danger, interference with allied access to Berlin ...(instead of) East German interference with West German access to Berlin." Political squabbles on all sides were ignored as much as possible. Difficulty in simply seating participants to general agreement was even one more reason why the US team limited its response to diplomatic means.<sup>111</sup>

Simultaneously in Geneva alongside the ministerial parleys, the US and Soviets also held bilateral discussions and began to lay the framework for Khrushchev's late 1959 visit to the United States. These discussions were often tedious though. The tenacious Gromyko had a deft touch for turning the tables on American strategy. When the Americans insisted on limiting discussion to German issues, he replied by insisting that a German settlement was purely a

matter for the Germans. An exasperated Herter asked what happened to other questions the Soviets had said they wanted to discuss, like the growing nuclear stockpiles in Germany. But Gromyko was too opaque for Herter to be able to engage more deeply. The Russians may have wanted to ensure that these private bilateral talks could not substitute for a summit meeting.<sup>112</sup>

Unfortunately, the architect of reason did not survive. John Foster Dulles died in Washington and was buried with honors. All the Foreign Ministers attended his funeral in Washington on May 28, one day past Khrushchev's original deadline. Their comity on the occasion was proof that, in this last assignment as both architect and instrument of U.S. foreign policy, Dulles had pursued the most effective course to defuse tensions constructively.<sup>113</sup>

## **Prevailing Interpretations of Berlin II**

At the time of the crisis, Berlin, the Cold War's preeminent symbol, was still firmly, if somewhat distantly, in the American and allied consciousness. The reasons were more symbolic than practical. Berlin was still important for a number of reasons, relating to intelligence, East-West trade, German pride and geography. It was a primary point of contact between East and West.

Though largely ornamental as a theater of influence, Berlin was especially valuable as an intelligence center for the America in Central Europe,<sup>114</sup> Veteran intelligence operatives David Murphy and Sergei Kondrashev argue that the Soviets actually ran a far more effective operation there than the U.S. Unfortunately, it was also an unacceptable explicit place for Eastern brainpower. General leakage of Communist assets to the west was one of Ulbricht's most persuasive complaints with Khrushchev.<sup>115</sup> The flow of refugees was an uncomfortable advertisement for the Western alternatives to socialism and this also may have motivated

Khrushchev.<sup>116</sup> But, in 1958-59, the value of German reunification and occupation to either the Americans or Soviets was secondary to greater concerns about nuclear armaments and peripheral situations. Influence in the peripheral areas of Asia, Africa and South America, where the situations were less fixed than they were in Europe, demanded close attention as well.

As Mikoyan's remarks to Dulles in January show, the Soviets by no means considered Berlin as the only area of contention with the Americans. Yet historians usually see Berlin II exclusively as a problem in German history rather than as simply another Cold War problem for the United States. Germany's primacy as political epicenter has, in fact been the main area of research for historians like Marc Trachtenberg. He said that Khrushchev's Berlin initiative "was rooted in the USSR's concern with Germany as a whole and above all with what was going on in West Germany..." Moscow "wanted the former allies to keep West Germany from becoming too powerful."<sup>117</sup> Despite trade advances and the successful re-equipping of its army, West Germany was still the junior partner of the Allies, not significantly threatening to anyone. Indeed, it was supported in great measure by the United States. Any challenge to revise the Potsdam agreements would have at least as much to do with the United States as the West Germans.

Given that Trachtenberg's focus is the long term European settlement, his Germany-first perspective is understandable. Regardless of whether or not Khrushchev's primary concern was Germany, the resolution of this challenge involved the disposition of the most powerful players to use all military capabilities available in case diplomatic activities did not succeed. The mix of these military and diplomatic options involved considerations of strength and lessons learned extending far beyond Germany. Hope Harrison notes that while the United States had not "confirmed the presence of Soviet medium-range nuclear missiles in the GDR in 1959, US

suspensions were enough to deepen U.S. apprehension.”<sup>118</sup> Even medium-range missiles, however, invoked the possibility of either side ending up using intercontinental nuclear weapons eventually. John Gaddis states that “NATO strategy had come to rely increasingly upon the first use of nuclear weapons in the event of a war.”<sup>119</sup> If that was the case, then it may be understandable why the Eisenhower-Dulles strategy kept NATO on the periphery of their response.

Nevertheless, Berlin II is not generally considered as a textbook example of pragmatic restraint where diplomatic resolution was emphasized. Authoritative modern historians such as Marc Trachtenberg, Hope Harrison, Thomas Schwartz, and John Gaddis have generally viewed the crisis as a primarily European problem, exacerbated by Dulles alleged penchant for unnecessary brinksmanship.<sup>120</sup> The question of whether the American strategy was a success or failure of in terms of allied relations or resolution of the German problem may be irresolvable.<sup>121</sup> The historiography is contradictory in evaluating what is usually considered as a marginal interlude of Cold War Berlin’s history before the drama of the Wall’s construction.

But there are other perspectives than the prevailing German interpretations of Berlin II. One is the crisis’ role in the developing rivalry between Khrushchev and Mao. Berlin II is also an important event in the careers of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, French President Charles DeGaulle, and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. These leaders all played active, but not necessarily decisive, roles. The interpretations of their roles in Berlin present their own challenges. For instance, Gordon Craig suggests that it was DeGaulle’s unwillingness to compromise that preserved West German independence, of which Adenauer remained very proud.<sup>122</sup>

These were all veteran leaders greatly familiar with war and the limits affecting the

effective application of force. But perhaps most essential to the success of diplomatic process over actual war were the formidable experience, talents, and inclinations of Eisenhower and Dulles. Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's own strong disposition against needless war was also a foundation of the eventual resolution of the crisis. Though projecting a more threatening public image,<sup>123</sup> he was relatively restrained in delivering his proposals. He also kept the Soviet forces in Germany restrained, for the most part, during the crisis. Although he had a much colder relationship with his diplomats –Taubman reports that Gromyko was terrified of Khrushchev – they did function very efficiently on his behalf.<sup>124</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles were faced with further problems in using force with necessary precision. Eisenhower was already dissatisfied with the Defense Department's efficiency and reliability and had ordered organizational review in June 1958.<sup>125</sup> His frustration was increased by disagreements among the allies over strategy and by pressures to increase military spending. Competition between the Departments of Defense and State for influence both in Washington and in the field, as well as inter-service conflicts within Defense compounded his frustration. The ability to use military force effectively was essential because there was no guarantee that negotiation would succeed or that the Soviets would not present new provocations. Effective military capability had to be preserved and not squandered through ill-considered displays of force. Eisenhower told a congressional group during this period: "the Communist objective is to spend ourselves into bankruptcy." He went on: "This is a continuous crisis: Iran, Indochina, Formosa, Iraq."<sup>126</sup> Instead of airlifts or heavily armored convoys through East Germany, the Allies needed to conserve their forces and show firmness through readiness and cohesion. Achieving this proved almost as intimidating as the prospect of Warsaw Pact tanks rolling across western plains.



Eisenhower and Dulles had similar basic instincts about the extra-Eurocentric nature of Khrushchev's real intentions and their allies mediocre experiences in using force ineffectively. Handling the allies was a delicate proposition even in before the state of alarm. Because Eisenhower's and Dulles's views were so congruent, the American President could send his Secretary of State to Europe as his direct emissary to allied heads of state. The able cooperation of the American diplomatic mission staff in Europe greatly facilitated Dulles's efforts. Through these experienced diplomatic channels, the United States successfully avoided a possible nuclear conflict through an acceptable compromise. They conceded to being summoned to the table under duress. This allowed the Soviets to present the East Germans as their partners at the same table in Geneva as the western allies, without either side having to extend formal recognition. At the same time, the US and its allies had outlasted Khrushchev's original six-month deadline and continue their presence in Berlin as before without any loss of military stature or position.

Berlin II may be most significant as a pivotal Cold War conflict resolution exercise for the United States. Though ostensibly involving all four western powers, it was an essentially bipolar conflict between the US and Soviets. It was the first major encounter between the superpowers since Korea to carry the active potential of nuclear combat. The success of the Eisenhower/Dulles "restraint with resolve" approach established a template of diplomatic negotiation with the USSR as a course of first and determined resort. Disappointing results with limited wars for both the US and its allies and for the Soviets may have prompted interest in finding such a new approach to conflict resolution. Eisenhower's New Look defense policy emphasized flexibility and defense more than aggressive containment.<sup>127</sup> His leadership style also allowed him to benefit from the new policy planning ideas while managing to channel their influence.<sup>128</sup>

Khrushchev had similarly drawn down the Soviet Union's armed forces yet was anxious to be able to project Soviet military strength if desired. There were compelling economic, political and strategic reasons for the Russian streamlining. But, as with the Americans, they also created some concern over maintaining effective strength. Nuclear deterrence involved considerably more risk than conventional forces but it also provided capabilities that seemed essential for superpower strategy. The writings of private nuclear strategists like Henry Kissinger, Edward Teller and Robert Osgood reflected the new rationales for risks of fallout and mass casualties.<sup>129</sup> The nuclear capacity provided the diplomats with a big stick to carry, but the uncomfortable reality for both sides was that any conventional action would be hard to sustain and nuclear exchanges would negate the value of the territory. If diplomats could just invoke the potential of nuclear weapons while trying to forestall the need for that recourse through negotiation, many problems associated with limited wars could be avoided.

Growing distance between the United States' diplomatic and military establishments in the period leading up to the crisis also discouraged Eisenhower's confidence in a military solution. Furthermore, State officials were openly skeptical over military competence at even minimal exercises of force. Rivalry between the armed services eroded Eisenhower's confidence even further.<sup>130</sup> General Clay's December convoy proposal and the March visit by the JCS to Herter show that the Pentagon was favorably disposed toward armed conflict. But the President saw war as an option of last resort. He was inclined to pursue negotiation instead.<sup>131</sup> And because his Secretary of State had increasingly similar instincts about Allied relations, the German question, negotiations with the Soviets and the hazards of accidental war, Dulles and his diplomatic team became the instrument of choice to resolve the problems at hand.

The lapsing of the May deadline without imminent forced reordering of Germany was

due to the effective restraint of force by all sides, led by the United States example. The unique capabilities and pragmatic attitudes of the US, Allied and Russian leaders and their diplomatic staffs and their underlying common interests were essential to the successful policy of restraint.

Dulles was no longer the rigid policy hawk with little command experience he had been when Eisenhower and Khrushchev had met in 1955.<sup>132</sup> He was no longer the dour Puritan attempting to keep Germany divided under the United States' terms. Nor did he attempt to put Europe under the US's nuclear thumb with Eisenhower's distracted approval. Such criticisms might have accurately characterized Dulles earlier in the decade as biographer Richard Goold-Adams has described.<sup>133</sup> But Goold-Adams concludes that by 1959, "first and foremost, he was from start to finish determined to prevent the use of force at almost any cost." Thomas Schwartz has pointed out the US had other problems to consider and could not undertake risk casually.<sup>134</sup> For example, in the midst of the crisis, on the first of January 1, 1959, suspected Soviet sympathizer Fidel Castro overthrew Cuba's U.S.-aligned government.<sup>135</sup> In the face of budget constraints and potential hazards of localized/limited wars demanding the attention of both Washington and Moscow, both countries found it incumbent to analyze militarization and limited war issues. Khrushchev himself had to deal with resistance from the Soviet military establishment when he attempted his own defense cutbacks in the latter 1950s.<sup>136</sup>

The Cold War presented ample opportunities for limited wars, some perhaps more welcome than others. As we compare Khrushchev's course and the American response, it is useful to consider that the doctrines of limited-war were first formulated to provide specific, feasible and effective means to political ends. Henry Kissinger's 1958 *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* expanded a paper he had written for the Council of Foreign Affairs, a body influential both within and outside the public sector.<sup>137</sup> This work was based theory not on

experience, beyond the fairly small-scale Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and the American and Soviet nuclear testing. Yet it gained some credence because the rules of war had changed greatly. The 1957 Sputnik launch promised ICBM delivery within months, even though neither sides missiles were quite reliable yet. The limited-war options Dulles and his staff were reviewing had considered possibilities of combat success - with and without nuclear weapons - apart from political sympathies. They attempted to weigh the advantages and problems for success, but the State Department's Policy Planning Staff remained only one subordinate executive department, with limited influence.<sup>138</sup> Their evaluations had to compete for attention with press columnists, private strategists, and defense contractor lobbyists.

Eisenhower did not want to muzzle the militarists too tightly, lest they lose their spark or seek new alliances. The atmosphere of militarization was fostered by the vigor of readiness but was containable.<sup>139</sup> The more militant of these "Cold Warriors" may have felt immune to general war's danger. They may have just learned to live in political denial, as the nuclear strategists did increasingly after basic cost-loss arithmetic caught up with arguments for acceptable use of nuclear deterrence. Anti-testing protest and disarmament rallies began to gain popular support. The acceptability of massive destruction receded rapidly once nuclear arms control talk began again with Khrushchev's late 1959 visit to Washington. This was aided in part by concerns over accidental use of nuclear weapons. At this point only a few leaders perceived that the Sputnik launch of 1957 was ushering in a level of uncertainty over accidental war. Within two years, nuclear accidents would become a favorite subject of popular terror. Khrushchev would then use that terror and the inexperience of another president as an excuse to engage in risky bluffing again over Berlin.

## **Conclusion: Nuclear Diplomacy as the Only Expedient Option**

Throughout Berlin II, the United States' response was restrained but tough and open to negotiation. The U.S. was prepared – over the objections of the West Germans and French - to negotiate objectionable topics. They called the Russian hand by considering such unappealing measures as an “agency principle.” This would allow East German document stamping and even plebiscites on reunification. But the President and Dulles both recognized that no unilateral reordering of the WWII jurisdiction arrangements could be tolerated.<sup>140</sup> Their disciplined strategy could forego some technicalities to avoid a destructive security and influence collapse over a Berlin that was of little functional value. The essentially diplomatic nature of the 4-power occupation agreement for Berlin - an agreement between states - also prompted a diplomatic course. The American diplomacy was backed by readiness to use force if and when the President deemed appropriate.<sup>141</sup> The Soviets could not be sure how the Americans would define these crucial variables.

The difficulty of conducting a limited war in Germany was a principle reason for choosing diplomacy. The Soviets had a considerable advantage in conventional assets and close proximity for supply and reinforcements that would be hard to quickly mobilize against. NATO's strategy for compensating for that advantage with tactical nuclear weapons presented additional hazards of radiation and massive destruction, as well as the potential for triggering escalation from local to general war. Limiting damage to civilians, essential infrastructure, and economic assets would be a daunting constraint even with conventional weapons. The use of nuclear weapons would be almost sure to spread the conflict beyond German borders.

Many of the East's grievances over Berlin were still in place a few years later – the drain

of human resources, the intelligence concerns, and the nuclear weapons close at hand.<sup>142</sup> The leading personalities of 1958 did not totally define the conflict over Berlin. It was geographically susceptible to war, especially under poor or distracted management as Cold War territories often were. One value in viewing Berlin II as a war problem is that in many ways it really was just another 'generic' conflict. The same Middle East and Third World conflicts Eisenhower had complained about to the Congressmen sprang up routinely in the Cold War only to subsume again into hibernation for a few more years. Egypt, Iran and Iraq, the Chinese offshore islands and Indochina were all arguably more unstable than Germany. China had bombarded the contested territories of Quemoy and Matsu just weeks before Khrushchev's November speech.<sup>143</sup> The loss of Berlin was simply not that much more dangerous in real, rather than symbolic, terms than other geo-strategic concerns.

While long-term divided-nation wars, like the Vietnam war, may have been the more common limited-war type, the limited-war perspective should also include the potential wars that shared many of the dangers but which were solved without much military action. As the influential theorist Robert Osgood himself observed in retrospect about Berlin II, "The US ...rejected the resort to...nuclear weapons...even though the U.S. enjoyed a...superiority in (these) weapons."<sup>144</sup> The limited-wars that could have been but were averted - like Berlin II - were Cold War success stories even though those successes were themselves often limited. They were never as costly, even in terms of prestige, as a war would have been. The diplomatic course in Berlin may not have produced conclusive results but neither did it leave Germany destroyed yet again. The proxy mode of conflict -- diplomatic exchange instead of military action -- pioneered in Berlin II was a very risky but viable alternative to general war. The example of Berlin II provides not only a useful set of options and also a set of typically

damaging accidental situations, and gives some sense of how to maintain a “safe zone.” Close attention to these events is intended to focus attention on how nations can preserve their peace against unrewarding and irresolvable future conflicts.

The value of Berlin II as a template for the future challenges is underscored by comments Paul H Nitze made in Milwaukee to the World Affairs Council in late February 1959. He described dilemmas that would face the entire next generation of US presidents and their advisors: “The process of action and reaction will test the resolution of both sides. It is comparable to the process of peeling off the successive layers of two onions. At the center of each onion is a kernel of self-knowledge that no stake, even the German stake, is worth a nuclear war. Each side will try to peel...the other side’s onion of resolution, while trying to protect its own. This is a dangerous game.”<sup>145</sup> The 1958-59 Berlin crisis was the first round with real nuclear war possibilities. It would not be the last.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen A. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p.481.

<sup>2</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 482f.

<sup>3</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 134f.

<sup>4</sup> Herter cable to US Embassy, Bonn, December 20, 1958, 762.0221/12-2058, Folder 2, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>5</sup> NATO meeting final communiqué, December 18, 1958, *Documents on Germany 1944-1959*, University of Wisconsin, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/history>, accessed April 2, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p.117.

<sup>7</sup> Memo of Dulles meeting with Norstad, Merchant, Whitney, Barbour, et al, US Embassy, London, Feb 4, 1959, 762.0221/2-0459, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>8</sup> Herter memo for Eisenhower, March 12, 1959, 762.0221/3-1259, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>9</sup> Young cable to Herter, from the Hague, April 15, 1959, 396.1-GE/4-1559, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson memo to Herter, from Moscow, April 23, 1959, 396.1-GE/4-2359, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>11</sup> State Dept. internal draft, "Foreign Ministers Briefing Book", Folder 1, Box 45, Lot 63D390, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>12</sup> Intelligence Summary cable, via Cummings, to 'American consul', Geneva, May 18, 1959, Folder 1, Box 45, Lot 63D390, RG 59, NARA.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Owen memo to Livingston Merchant & draft working paper "Berlin Contingency Planning", March 12, 1959, folder "Henry Owen: January-June 1959), Box 182, Lot#67D548, RG 59, NARA

<sup>14</sup> Dulles cable to Bonn and Paris embassies, November 24, 1958, Folder 4, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA



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- <sup>15</sup> Simon Sefarty, *American Foreign Policy In A Hostile World: Dangerous Years* (New York: Praeger, 1984), p. 137f.
- <sup>16</sup> Bruce cable to U.S. embassies in Moscow, London and Paris, September 16, 1958, 762.0221/9-1658, Box 3534, RG 1959, NARA
- <sup>17</sup> Gufler cable to Dulles, September 19, 1958, 762.0221/9-1658, Box 3534, RG 1959, NARA
- <sup>18</sup> Harrison, *Driving the Soviets*, p.110.
- <sup>19</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbot, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co.,1970), p. 454f.
- <sup>20</sup> Philip Farley letter to G. Smith, April 23, 1958 , Folder 2, Box 1994, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>21</sup> NSC 5803, (September 1958), Folder 1, Box 23, RG 273, NARA.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Elbert Matthews to Gerard Smith, "USAF Assumptions Regarding Limited Nuclear Combat", Folder 5, Box 1994, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>24</sup> "Philosophy of Limited War" briefing for Army Policy Council, Folder 5, Box 1994, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>25</sup> Robert W. Coakley, "The Army as a Flexible Instrument of National Policy", in Gordon Turner and Richard Challener, eds., *National Security In The Nuclear Age* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960) p.260.
- <sup>26</sup> Elbert Matthews to Gerard Smith, "USAF Assumptions...", Folder 5, Box 1994, RG 59, NARA
- <sup>27</sup> Bruce cable to Dulles, September 2, 1958, 762.0221/9-258, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>28</sup> Gufler cable to Dulles, September 2, 1958, 762.0221/9-258, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>29</sup> Bruce cable to Dulles, September 3, 1958, 762.0221/9-358, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>30</sup> Gufler cable to Dulles, September 5, 1958, 762.0221/9-558, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>31</sup> Bruce cable to Dulles, September 8, 1958, 762.0221/9-858, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>32</sup> Dulles cable to Bonn, September 10, 1958, 762.0221/9-858, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>33</sup> Bonn embassy cable to Dulles, September 22, 1958, 762.0221/9-2258, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.

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- <sup>34</sup> Kearney to Hillenbrand State Dept. legal advisor, October 28, 1958, 762.0221/10-2858, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>35</sup> Bruce internal cable to US Berlin personnel, November 23, 1958, 762.0221/11-2358, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>36</sup> Robert Bowie, and Richard Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.247.
- <sup>37</sup> Examples: Burns (in Bonn) cable to Dulles; Whitney (in London) cable to Dulles; Matthews cable to Dulles, all November 13, 1958, 762.0221 /11-1358, Box 3534, RG 59
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- <sup>39</sup> Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.193.
- <sup>40</sup> Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall*, p. 97.
- <sup>41</sup> Zubok/Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, p. 195.
- <sup>42</sup> Piotr Wandycz, "Rapacki: The Search for Security", in Gordon Craig and Francis Loewenheim, ed., *The Diplomats: 1939 -1979* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) p.309.
- <sup>43</sup> Zubok/Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, p.199, p. 111-112.
- <sup>44</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p.396.
- <sup>45</sup> Roy Medvedev, *Khrushchev* (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1983
- <sup>46</sup> Zubok/Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, p.199
- <sup>47</sup> Letter from Eisenhower to Khrushchev, July 2, 1958, *Documents on Germany 1944-1959*, University of Wisconsin, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/history>, accessed March 12, 2006.
- <sup>49</sup> Douglas Kinnard, *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A Study in Defense Politics* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1977) pp. 77f.
- <sup>50</sup> Bowie/Immerman, *Waging Peace*, p. 246.
- <sup>51</sup> J. Garry Gifford, "Bureaucratic Politics", in Michael Hogan and Thomas Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.142.
- <sup>52</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace: 1956-1961* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 362-63.

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- <sup>53</sup> Blanche Weisen Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1981), p. 208f.
- <sup>55</sup> Richard Goold-Adams, *John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1962), p.263.
- <sup>56</sup> Kinnard, *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management*, p.74.
- <sup>57</sup> State Department brief: *The Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 1957-58, Folder 5, Box 1995, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>58</sup> Speech by Paul H. Nitze to World Affairs Council, Milwaukee, Feb 21, 1959, 762.00/3-1759, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
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- <sup>60</sup> Letter and Memo from Merchant to Murphy, November 20, 1958, Folder 2, Box 1993, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>62</sup> Letters from Gufler and Burns, US Embassy, Bonn, to Foy Kohler and Martin Hillenbrand at State Dept, November 24, 1958, Folder 2, Box 1993, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>63</sup> Soviet note to Thompson, November 27, 1958, *Documents on Germany 1944-1959*, University of Wisconsin, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/history>, accessed April 2, 2006
- <sup>64</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p.402.
- <sup>65</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p.399.
- <sup>66</sup> Smith letter to Murphy, December 2, 1958, Box 5, Box 1994, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>67</sup> Merchant letter to Gen. Clay, December 3, 1958, 762.0221/12-858 CS/MDR, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>68</sup> Gufler to Dulles, relaying Soviet General Zakharov note to Gen. Hammett, re US tank activity in Koenigsweg, December 20, 1958, 762.0221/12-2058, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>69</sup> Paris embassy memo to Dulles, December 15, 1958, 762.0221/12-1558 CS/MDR, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.

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- <sup>70</sup> McElroy memo to West German Foreign Minister Strauss and Undersecretary of State Irwin, December 20, 1958, 762.0221/12-2058, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
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- <sup>72</sup> Morton Halperin, *Limited War In The Nuclear Age* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1963), p. 68.
- <sup>73</sup> Merchant letter to Clay, December 8, 1958, US State Dept, 762.0221/12-858, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>74</sup> Herter memo to Bonn, December 11, 1959, State Dept. Central Files, 762.0221/12-858 CS/MDR, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>75</sup> Bruce to Herter, December 3, 1958, US State Dept., 762.0221/12-358 CS/MDR, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>76</sup> Dulles memo re meeting with Eisenhower, November 30, 1958, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-60*, The Berlin Crisis (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), 8:143.
- <sup>77</sup> Cable Reports from Dulles re Paris meetings, December 12-15, 1958, Ibid; 190-220.
- <sup>78</sup> NATO Communique, December 18, 1958, University of Wisconsin Digital Collection, @<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/history>, accessed March 14, 2006.
- <sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p.2.
- <sup>80</sup> Mikoyan-Dulles meeting, January 16, 1959, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Arms Control and Disarmament*, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-60*, The Berlin Crisis (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), 1023
- <sup>81</sup> Mikoyan-Eisenhower meeting, January 17, 1959, FRUS 1958-60, 8:279.
- <sup>82</sup> Memo of Dulles-Macmillan-Lloyd-Merchant meeting in London, February 3, 1959, 762.0221/2-359, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>83</sup> Bruce cable to Herter, February 2, 1959, 762.0221/2-259, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>84</sup> Bruce cable to Herter, February 4, 762.0221/2-459, Box 3534, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>85</sup> Bruce cable to Herter, February 5, State Dept Central Files, 762.0221/2-559, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>86</sup> Uncredited PPS Memo, with circulation notation, February 5, 1959, folder "Henry Owen: January-June 1959), Box 182, Lot#67D548, RG 59, NARA

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- <sup>87</sup> Dulles letter to State Dept., February 3, 1959, 762.0221/2-359, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>88</sup> Memo of Dulles-Norstad-Merchant meeting at London embassy, February 4, 1959, 762.0221/2-459, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>89</sup> Memo of Dulles-Macmillan-Lloyd-Merchant meeting at London embassy, February 4, 1959, 762.0221/2-459, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>90</sup> Memo of Dulles-DeGaulle meeting in Paris, February 6, 1959, 762.0221/2-459, Box 3535, R G 59, NARA.
- <sup>91</sup> Thompson cable to Dulles, February 7, 1959, 762.0221/2-759, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>92</sup> Memo of Dulles-Adenauer meeting in Bonn, February 8, 1959, 762.0221/2-459, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>94</sup> Cable from Bonn to Dulles, February 9, 1959, 762.0221/2-959, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>95</sup> Richard Goold-Adams, *John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal*, p.282.
- <sup>96</sup> Thompson cable to Herter, February 27, 1959, Herter memo to US European missions, February 28, 1959, 762.221/2-2759 and 2-2859, all Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>97</sup> Becker memo to Herter, March 4, 1959, 762.221/3-459, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>99</sup> Memo of meeting, Herter-Merchant-McElroy-Twining, etc., March 14, 1959, Box 3535, 762.0221/4-1859, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p.8.
- <sup>101</sup> Gufler cable to Herter, March 14, 1959, 762.0221/4-1859, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>102</sup> Memo of Herter meeting with Macmillan, Lloyd, and Caccia, March 12, 1959, 762.0221/3-1259, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>103</sup> Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Power, Pragmatism & Piety In U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Books, 1999), p.195.
- <sup>104</sup> Memo of Herter meeting with unnamed Polish aide, March 24, 1959, 762.0221/3-1259, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>105</sup> Soviet note to US State Dept, March 30, 1959, 762.0221/4-1859, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.

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- <sup>106</sup> Thompson letter to Merchant, April 6, 1959, 762.0221/4-659, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>107</sup> Tyler memo re quadripartite meeting Bonn, April 18, 1959, 762.0221/4-1859, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>108</sup> Smith memorandum to Herter, April 22, 1959, Henry Owen memo to Livingston Merchant & draft working paper "Berlin Contingency Planning", March 12, 1959, folder "Henry Owen: January-June 1959), Box 182, Lot#67D548, RG 59, NARA
- <sup>109</sup> "Foreign Ministers Briefing Book", May 1959, Folder 1, Box 43, Lot 63D390, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>111</sup> Herter to Merchant, April 6, 1959, 762.0221/4-1659, Box 3535, RG 59, NARA.
- <sup>112</sup> Gromyko -Herter meeting, May 12, 1959, FRUS: 8:297, 691-94.
- <sup>113</sup> Eisenhower diary entry, May 28, 1959, Document 1178, Volume XIX, Louis Galambos and Daun Van Ee eds. *Presidential Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960-61)
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- <sup>115</sup> David Murphy and Sergei Kondrashev, *Battleground Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p.201.
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- <sup>117</sup> Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, p. 252.
- <sup>118</sup> Harrison, *Driving the Soviets*, p.129.
- <sup>119</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.137.
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- <sup>123</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p. 398.
- <sup>124</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p.399.
- <sup>125</sup> Kinnard, *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management*, p.88.
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- <sup>127</sup> Bowie/Immerman, *Waging Peace*, p. 246.
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<sup>142</sup> Edward Crankshaw, footnote 3, chapter 14, in in Khrushchev's *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 454.

<sup>143</sup> Richard v. Damms, *The Eisenhower Presidency* (New York: Pearson, 2002), p.88.

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<sup>145</sup> Paul H. Nitze speech to World Council, Milwaukee, February 21, 1959, 762.00/3-1759, Box 35435, RG 59, NARA.



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## VITA

Richard Dean Williamson was born on September 9, 1952, in Farmington New Mexico. He graduated from high school in June 1970 at McCallie School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He graduated from college in August 1990, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of New Orleans. In December 1990, he received a Master of Fine Arts, Drama and Communications from the University of New Orleans. His work experience includes four years (1977-81) as a Tender/Diver with Taylor Diving & Salvage Co., Belle Chasse, La. Following graduation in English from the University of New Orleans, he worked for SubSea International, also in Belle Chasse, as a technical writer and industrial video producer. Following his MFA from UNO, he worked as a development writer for Tulane University in New Orleans from 1994-2004. In 2004, he began graduate studies at UNO in history, concentrating on diplomatic history, with coursework in ancient history, colonial Atlantic history, and medieval history. Richard Williamson also co-founded, wrote for and performed rock music with the Product Four orchestra in Baton Rouge, La. from 1979-1986.